

# Highlands' Newspaper

FREE

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### On-going

- At Highlands Wine & Cheese at the Falls on Main, free wine flights Friday & Saturday from 4:30-6:30 p.m.
- "Evenings of Entertainment" Friday nights at Instant Theatre Company in Oak Square on Main Street. Tickets are \$15 with reservations and \$20 at the door. Doors open at 7:45 p.m. Show starts promptly at 8 p.m. Call for reservations. 342-9197.
- Pilates classes are Tuesdays & Thursdays at 5:15 p.m. at the Rec Park. The cost is \$8 per class.

### March 3, 4, 5

- Macon County Soccer Club Spring Soccer Registration is at the Rec Park from 5:30-7 p.m. Thursday and Friday, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on Saturday. \$30 for returning players; \$40 for new players; \$5 sibling discount. Make checks out to Macon County Soccer Club. For more info, call Christy Nix Weller at 526-9931.

### March 5

- The Episcopal Church of the Incarnation is sponsoring 'Flying Solo,' a seminar for area singles Saturday March 5 from 10 a.m.-3p.m. Flying Solo founder, Dr. Kay Collier McLaughlin, a psychologist with specialties in group development, issues of singleness and bereavement counseling. The class costs \$5 and includes lunch. Call 526-2968.

- Chili Cook Off and Salsa Contest at the Highlands Conference Center from 6:30-9:30 p.m. \$20 per person for chili, salsa and beer. Tickets available at the Visitor Center. For more info, call 526-5841.

### March 6

- Taco Dinner at Highlands United Methodist Church to raise funds for Bolivia mission trip at noon. \$7 adults, \$3 children.

### March 8

- PTO is hosting a chili dinner from 5-6 p.m. in the school cafeteria. It's free, but donations are appreciated. Meeting is from 6-7 p.m. with the World of Science exhibits after.

### March 9 & 10

- HS students in grades K-8 are supporting the American Heart Association by collecting sponsorships for jumping rope and playing basketball.

### March 10 & 11

- Highlands School will dismiss at 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 10 for staff development. There will be no school on Friday, March 11 for a teacher workday.

Volume 3, Number 9

Locally Owned & Operated

Friday, March 4, 2005

## Drug task force on track in Highlands

By Erin Brown  
Staff Writer

Drug use, drug testing, policing and community trust are at the center of the formation of a new drug task force committee in town.

At the March 2 Town Board meeting, Dr. Patty Wheeler asked

commissioners to back the idea saying there are trust issues between community members and the Highlands police department.

"Several people in the community are concerned with trying to enhance public safety and interaction with the

police force. The community is uncomfortable with who to trust and that's the concern that I hear," Wheeler, a local general physician said. "There is some concern with why some things are not followed up on."

▪See **TASK FORCE** page 14

## School BOE rides high tech highway



Photo by Jim Lewicki

The Macon County School Board has joined other boards across the state in paper-less meetings. After a crash course from district technology guru Dee Cox, members worked from laptops during Monday night's meeting. Pictured are board members Donnie Edwards and Tommy Cabe with Cox. See story page 3.

## Start-up date set, not calendar

By Kim Lewicki

Organizations lobbying for a later school start-up date have won – the first day of school for 2005 is Aug. 25. That means a longer summer this year, but lots of calendar changes for the 2005-2006 school year.

At the Feb. 28 Macon County School Board meeting, Superintendent Dr. Rodney Shotwell presented three versions of the 2005-2006 calendar. The last day of school will be June 2, June 6 or June 7.

"We are posting a draft of the calendar on our website and our policy council will take feedback from principals for

a week," said Shotwell. "Then we will have a calendar to recommend to the BOE for approval at the March meeting."

The last day of school depends on how teacher work days, staff development days and inclement weather days are dispersed throughout the year.

"Christmas break will be a little shorter, and if there is bad weather spring break could be lost all together," said Shotwell. "With the late start-up date, we lost five workdays that could have been absorbed."

Chairman of the board Kevin Corbin suggested parents hold off buy-

▪See **CALENDAR** page 8

## Counterfeit bill cashed at D&J's Express Mart

By Erin Brown  
Staff Writer

When readying the deposit for D & J's Express Mart last week Owner Tony Potts noticed something strange.

"You could tell just by looking at it," he said of a counterfeit \$20 bill that was cashed that day. Potts said there was no thread running through it. "New \$20s, \$50s and \$100s all have it and this one didn't," he said.

The procedure for determining a counterfeit bill is simple enough. A pen is used to mark it and if the

▪See **COUNTERFEIT** page 7

## Infrastructure plans unveiled

By Kim Lewicki

The town hopes a whopping \$12.4 million in infrastructure needs will serve as proof in convincing the county of its need for a long-term financial commitment.

At the March 2 Town Board meeting, Town Engineer Lamar Nix supplied commissioners with detailed maps outlining current and future infrastructure, including water and sewer line expansion.

"This wasn't dreamed up since last week's meeting," said Nix. "All of this was identified last year as requested by the state."

▪See **INFRASTRUCTURE** page 8

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## • LETTERS TO THE EDITOR •

### In defense of pawn shop

Dear Editor,

Edna Foster's vitriolic comment at the end of her tirade implies that the owners of the pawn shop are sleazy as well.

I hope Mr. and Mrs. Bowers file a lawsuit against Foster for defamation of character. Wouldn't it be ironic that when the Bowers prevail and Foster is broke, she'll trot to the pawn shop to hock her belongings.

Rene Imar  
Highlands

### Family to lose Habitat house

Dear Editor,

Have you heard that Habitat for Humanity is trying to take away Carlos and Christal Green's house?

The problem seems to be Carlos's relationship with the liaison. When that happens Habitat is supposed to replace that person with someone else, but that didn't happen in the Greens' case until things got out of hand.

You may know Carlos and Christal from last fall's production of Cotton Patch Gospel at the Performing Arts Center. Carlos played a modern day Jesus and Christal several roles. They are a very talented couple and have contributed to the community in many ways. Christal is a full time mother and Carlos works for the Town of Highlands. He is one of the guys who works all hours to be sure our roads are clear in bad weather.

Christal and Carlos intend to fight for their house, but this will not be easy or inexpensive. Although I have agreed to represent them free, their costs beyond that could be substantial. This is particularly true if the matter goes to trial or is appealed.

The Greens have borrowed \$5,000 for starters, but you may want to show your support by calling them at 526-2389, or even by contributing to the Christal, Carlos, Chela and Griffin Green Defense Fund, c/o Jack Mayer, Attorney at Law, Post Office Box 750, Highlands, NC 28741, 526-3731. After the \$5,000. has been used, any contributed funds would be spent on a prorata basis. These funds would be kept separately and returned to you if not used.

Thanks for listening.

Jack Mayer  
Highlands

### Saying 'good-bye' with papered windows

Dear Editor,

One cannot but wonder as he drives down the streets of Highlands if we live in a "ghetto", sans plywood. Many of the stores are closed for the season and their windows are adorned with brown paper or newspapers. Could it be that they had a good season, left for warmer climates, leaving those of us who are fortunate enough to live here all year long with those awful sights?

It would seem that they do not care about Highlands as a town or its inhabitants. If shopkeepers do not have enough respect for this town and its people, perhaps they should put themselves in our shoes for a while, stay around and look at all those brown paper window dressings. Wouldn't inexpensive Venetian blinds or attractive drapes be better? I would also suggest a sign saying "Thanks for a good season. We will see you in the spring."

According to Bill Basham of the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber can only make recommendations to merchants. Does the Town Appearance Committee have any jurisdiction in these matters? Let's get out of the "ghetto" and make Highlands as beautiful in the winter as it is in the summer.

David Heller  
Highlands

# Technology upgrades systemwide

By Kim Lewicki

The Feb. 28 School Board meeting was the first of its kind in Macon County. Each member sat behind a laptop and the entire agenda -- pertinent documents and all -- was projected onto a screen for all to see.

"We've been encouraging the use of technology in our schools, so as a board we should set an example and use it, too," said Chairman Kevin Corbin. He said the move to computers is also more energy-efficient. "We were making hundreds of copies of agendas for years and years. If nothing else, we're saving paper."

Board members said the cost of the 15 laptops will be realized in two years just from manhours and paper

savings.

Laptops for board members is part of the county-wide technology upgrade instigated by the transfer of \$180,750 in capital funds to the technology fund.

"We have all the equipment ordered and are ready to go," said Superintendent Rodney Shotwell.

County-wide techology upgrades are part of the school system's five-year plan, but it's happening faster than planned.

"Implementation of NC WISE is making this a four-year plan rather than a five-year plan," said Shotwell.

With the NC WISE student information system on line, every teacher can take attendance and log

▪See **TECHNOLOGY** page 7

## ● OBITUARY ●

### Melody Ann Breedlove

Melody Ann Breedlove, age 41, of the Bryson City Road, Franklin, N.C. died Saturday, February, 26 at her residence.

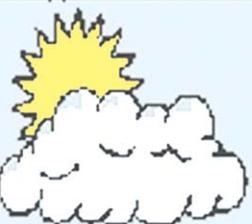
A native of Macon County, she was a daughter of the late Ernest LeRoy Holland and Sophia Pendergrass of Franklin. She was the purchasing manager for Whitley Manufacturing and was an active member in Relay for Life. She was also a member of the First Assembly of God Church.

In addition to her mother, she is survived by a daughter, Elana Breedlove of Franklin; a son, Derik Breedlove of the home; two sisters, Brenda Pangle and Azelia "Zee" Woods, both of Franklin; four brothers, Rickey Holland of Highlands, Reggie Holland of Traphill, N.C., Ron Holland of Franklin, and Tracy Holland also of Franklin; and two grandchildren, Eythan and Dayson Breedlove. Several nieces and nephews also survive. She was preceded in death by a brother, Seivert Holland.

Funeral services were held at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, March 1, at the First Assembly of God Church, with The Rev. Tom Grubb and The Rev. Robert Dryman officiating. Pallbearers were Mike Breedlove, Joe Breedlove, Lyman Holland, Todd McGaha, Mark Holland and Danny Lee Holland.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Angel Hospice, 170 Church Street, Franklin, NC 28734 or to Relay for Life.

Bryant Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

FRI	SAT	SUN
		
<b>HI 48</b>	<b>HI 47</b>	<b>HI 50</b>
<b>LO 27</b>	<b>LO 32</b>	<b>LO 31</b>

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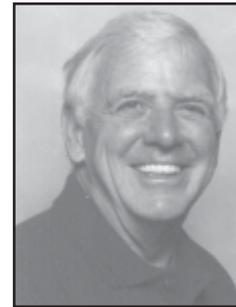

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• **LAUGHING AT LIFE** •

**Who is sleeping with the FDA?**  
(The "take and die" list is growing)

**A**h yes, the Federal Drug Administration. In their honor, let's all sing this song to the tune of Dragnet, "Dumb, Dumb, Dumb, Dumb." Got it? Good, now altogether, "Dumb, Dumb, Dumb, Dumb."



**Fred Wooldridge**

the FDA. If he says yes, I ask to see his financial portfolio of drug companies he invests in. I would never take any drug on his list. In fact, I "just say no" to drugs, period. That's how I am able to stay alive for so long.

I started getting suspicious when the drug companies started flood-

Just when you thought it was a good thing to take one teeny weeny baby aspirin to help prevent a stroke or heart attack because, eons ago, the FDA said it would be good to do, the cone heads with the FDA have now issued a bulletin saying it probably does more harm than good. Oh, great, now that I have taken thousands of those little rascals!

A lot of hand wringing went into this announcement because many of the doctors who run the FDA probably had stock in "St. Joseph's Aspirin" and knew they would have to sell it before it plummeted on the stock exchange. I wonder how many bought stock in that company just before they announced, "Put on your rose colored glasses and eat aspirin; it's pink, yummy and good for you."

Who is sleeping with the FDA? Apparently everyone, but the drug companies for sure. In reality, there is nothing "dumb, dumb, dumb, dumb" about any of this. These guys are all doctors, so we can automatically conclude they are smart... I think. How else could all these killer drugs get on the market?

How about "Aleve"? Supposedly a harmless over-the-counter pain killer taken by millions of Americans is now on the "take and die" list. At least they had the "killer" part right. Now we know why doctors use the word "practice" so much in their work. They're practicing on us.

I had a dream the other night that a whole bunch of doctors filled an airplane and just after takeoff, the pilot announced that during the flight he would be "practicing" some new experimental techniques he just learned. (Ha!)

I have about as much faith in the FDA as an Iraq detective solving a homicide in Baghdad. When I am actually forced to see a doctor because I have cut off my hand or something like that, I ask him if he is on the staff of

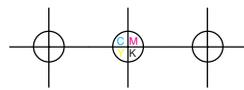
ing television with ads about how wonderful their products are. Approved by the FDA, one company boasts that if you take their product for high cholesterol you won't fall down while attending social engagements... huh? I am not exaggerating. All this time I thought it was the booze. Did you see that ad? While soft, soothing music is played, a silver tongued guy says that some minor side affects may occur, such as chronic liver damage, stuttering, loss of your first born, total paralysis, etc.

Now the FDA announces that 65% of all people who die of heart attacks have normal cholesterol levels and cholesterol medicines may not be helping, but instead, harming us. Because of this discovery, it is expected that sometime during the year of 2020, the FDA will announce high cholesterol has nothing to do with blocked arteries and will recommend an anti-inflammatory drug for our arteries instead. This will occur, of course, only after the proper stocks are sold and purchased.

Even the so called "alternative medicine" doctors, who don't trust regular doctors, are not to be trusted. I recently learned that a little known vitamin, CLA, may do wonders for your health but only if it contains one key ingredient. In order to get that key ingredient, you have to buy a certain brand of CLA. Guess who owns the company that sells it. Yep, you got it, the doctor who recommended taking CLA.

Recently the Feds revised their food pyramid. Now, as it turns out, the best thing to eat is lots of whole grain and fruit. Are they kidding? No Duh.....my Ma told me that when I was four and she was no doctor. This all comes in the midst of warnings to stay off fatty foods.... no, I mean some fat foods

▪See WOOLDRIDGE page 6



# • MOVIE PIX •

## Bubba Ho Tep

The 2004, R rated comedy/horror/schlock-fest, starring Bruce Campbell (Army of Darkness, Hudsucker Proxy), the late, great Ossie Davis (who's 60-year-long career included 12 Angry Men, Miss Ever's Boy's, Client, and more), directed by Don Coscarelli, with



Stuart Armor

hilarious and creepy music by Brian Taylor. Adapted from a short story by Joe Lansdale.

The Storyline: The King is dead (so you say). Nope, despite what you may have heard, the King of rock-and-roll is not dead, but he's not really doing all that well, thanks for asking. Elvis Presley resides in Mud Creek, Texas, at the Shady Rest Nursing Home, along with his buddy, JFK (there actually is an explanation given for this, but I'm not going to give away any of the dramatic subtleties of the story). But that's not all that lives in the neighborhood, there is also one of those soul sucking Egyptian mummies that prey on the elderly residents of the only home Elvis and the former chief executive have left (he's not one of the major mummies, you understand, I think he's like, King Tut's brother-in-law or something), and that has gotten them mad. Real Mad (Let's kill us a mummy, Baby). So, armed with a few choice magic phrases out of The Everyday Man Or Woman's Guidebook of The Soul, some rhinestones, and Elvis's walker, which he wields with

rapier-like accuracy, they get set to kick some zombie tail (although I don't think that's the word he used).

Low budget and low brow, I think I can say, without fear of contradiction, that this is a film without a single redeeming quality.

Campbell as Elvis is foul mouthed and disgusting (and strangely articulate and philosophical), Ossie Davis as JFK is simply brilliantly bizarre, or perhaps bizarrely brilliant, and the storyline is likely to be offensive to fans of both Elvis and JFK, as well as most anyone with a grain of good taste big enough to shake against an IQ point. It is an absolute masterpiece of moronics, a treasure of tastelessness, it contains a surfeit of stupidity, it ascends to the apogee of awfulness. I watched it twice, just to confirm to myself that it was as bad as I thought it was on first viewing. Fans of really weird dark comedy will instantly recognize this film as one that will stand out among such contemptible classics as Clerks, Rocky Horror Picture Show, From Dusk Till Dawn, Very Bad Things, Weekend at Bernie's and the French classic, Baxter, a film that proves that Americans don't have a lock on bad taste.

Bubba Ho Tep was an official selection of the Hong Kong Film Festival, winner of the Toronto Film Festival, and received the Bram Stoker Award. What do you make of that?

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<b>MILLION DOLLAR BABY</b> rated PG-13 Fri: (4:30), 7, 9:30 Sat: (2), (4:30), 7, 9:30 Sun: (2), (4:30), 7 Mon - Thur: (4:30), 7	<b>BECAUSE OF WINN-DIXIE</b> rated PG Fri: (4:10), 7:05 Sat: (2:05), (4:10), 7:05 Sun: (2:05), (4:10), 7:05 Mon - Thur: (4:10), 7:05
	<b>CONSTANTINE</b> rated R Fri & Sat: 9:10

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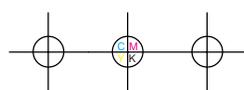
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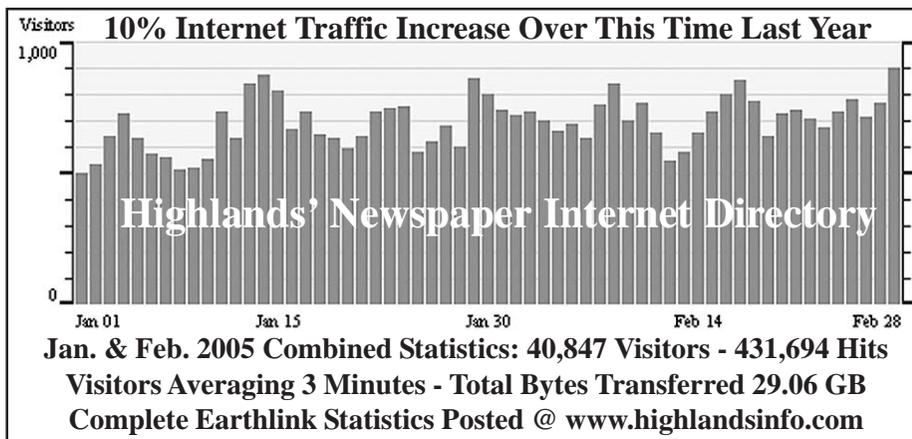
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## Sweetheart Royalty at Living Center

A special Valentine's Day dinner at the Fidelia Eckerd Living Center Feb. 13 was presided over by residents Frank Smith and Lucy Norris, who were chosen King and Queen of this year's event.

Resident Simon Pell and Donna Henry were runners up in the contest, which was held as a fund-raiser.

Employees of the center and family members were allowed to purchase votes, with proceeds going to help fund special activities in the future.

Those "elected," received prizes donated by the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital Gift Shop.

The Valentine's Day dinner was sponsored by the Visionary Eden Team.



Frank Smith and Lucy Norris, who were chosen King and Queen for Valentine's Day.

## Highlands student wins writing contest

Matthew McClellan, an eighth grade student at Highlands School, is a state winner in the North Carolina Reading Association's Young Authors Writing Contest. Matthew and eight other winners from the Franklin area were sponsored by the Western Mountains Reading Council. The topic for this year was "How Do I . . ."

Each winner's writing will be published in the 2004-2005 Young Author's Book, and winners are invited to attend a Young Author's State Celebration to be held on April 9 at the Barton College Gym in Wilson, N.C. Matthew is the son of Brian and Julie McClellan of Highlands.



Matthew McClellan

## For the Craftsmen

In the beautiful state we call N.C.,  
Crafts have played a part.  
Potters, Painters, Quilters, Weavers  
All display their art.

For hundreds and hundreds of years  
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and hooks  
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Like golden tapestry  
Is a basket made of straw.

The Weaver's hands are tired and worn  
But her eyes are without flaw.

The Potter's gift is special  
For it is not the norm  
He holds and molds and shapes the clay:  
His soul in solid form.

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With a smile upon his face  
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In the most unlikely place

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Who make our state unique  
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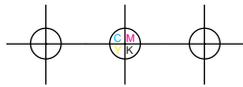
## ... WOOLDRIDGE continued from page 4

have good fat.... no, I mean stay away from carbs.... no, I mean more protein, less cholesterol.... oops, I mean cholesterol is no longer bad, I forgot, but stay away from sugar because sugar tastes great and, therefore, it is very, very bad unless it's Hershey bars which I own stock in. It all just makes me want to go out and eat a "Big Mac."

In police work we have a saying. If

you simply can't find a motive or wonder why very bright people do seemingly very dumb things, there's money involved. Always follow the money.

If I were on a permanent drug prescribed by a doctor, I would be doing serious, continuous homework on the product. The track record, as of late, for the FDA is scary.



### ... COUNTERFEIT continued from page 1

marking turns black, the bill is a fake. If the bill is legitimate, the color turns more yellow.

Highlands Police Chief Jerry Cook said that there are no "indicators" on this bill.

"There is supposed to be a strip running top to bottom that has "Twenty USA" written on it, and it's not there," Cook said. "Also there is no "ghost." They can't seem to duplicate the ghost." The ghost of the president on the bill is always on the right hand side.

Potts said the feel of the bill was less crispy, too, and it looked like it was copied on copy paper.

A local bank official said that real money feels cloth-like and this doesn't.

"The color was right, though," Potts admitted.

As soon as Potts discovered the bill was counterfeit he called the Highlands Police Department.

Chief Cook said that usually the Secret Service handles counterfeit money, and they have a specific division for that. "But we have not notified them because so far it's just one 20," Chief Cook said. "We're waiting to see if more show up."

Note: Advanced copying technologies have helped raise the incidence of counterfeiting. Ink jet printers, color copiers, and scanners are just a few tools criminals use to create bogus bills.

A safer, smarter and more secure \$20 note began circulating October 9, 2003, as part of the U.S. government's ongoing effort to stay ahead of counterfeiting and maintain worldwide confidence and trust in U.S. currency.

The redesigned \$20 bill was the first in the Series 2004 currency designs, which include enhanced security features and subtle background colors. Features include a watermark, security thread, color-shifting ink, microprinting, low-vision features, Federal Reserve indicators, serial numbers and design features including color and symbols of freedom and updated portraits and vignette.

### ... TECHNOLOGY continued from page 3

grades from computers in their rooms.

"To make this all work, we're upgrading computers and buying more bandwidth," said Shotwell.

For years Macon County schools have been plagued with sluggish connectivity, but that will soon end.

The BalsamWest Fiber Loop is expected to be online by Fall 2005. Until then, the school district has contracted with DNET for 128,000 more bandwidth costing \$2,000 a month.

By April, 152 old beige Dells in

Cook said the department notified all the banks and the convenience stores and asked them to keep a lookout for fake 20s.

Potts said that marking every bill as it comes into the store is customary, but it's usually done routinely on the bigger bills. "Usually the larger bills are the counterfeit ones," he said.

"When it gets to be 4 or 5 o'clock in the afternoon, we just don't have time to mark every bill," Potts said. "Especially when they give you four or five bills at a time, there's just no way to check each one."

Chief Cook said counterfeit 10s and 20s are circulating in Clayton, Ga. "It's possible someone passed through Clayton and then came here and didn't even know they had it."

He said the department has dealt with counterfeit 100s in the past and notified the Secret Service about those. "We caught the individual responsible for that," Chief Cook said. "But we've never dealt with 20s before."

So far only one bill has shown up in Highlands.

"We're just going to have to pay more attention," Potts said.

all the Macon County schools will be replaced by new black Dells and just about every computer will get additional RAM -- 183 computers will get 256 more RAM; 71 computers will get 512 more RAM.

"Four years ago I was charged with looking at technology and making technology improvements to our schools," said Shotwell.

In four years, Macon County Schools have spent \$1.2 million upgrading technology in 10 schools and at the administrative level.

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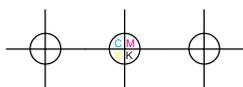
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Wilda Boyette and Debbie Grossman were inducted as new members of the Mountaintop Rotary on Feb. 18. Pictured with them are President Curtis Mathews, Joe Simmons, Maria Thompson and Kitty Byers.

## MtnTop Rotary inducts new members



Photo by Carol Matthews

## ... CALENDAR continued from page 1

ing airplane tickets or making reservations for vacation during spring break in case the vacation is cancelled. "If they don't like it, they can write the State Board of Education and complain," he said.

Shotwell said the board is disappointed the calendar waiver was not approved for all 10 schools in the county. "But we will make the new start-date work as best we can. It is important to create a calendar that will support our high school students with the dual enrollment classes at SCC."

Luckily, Southwestern Community College has agreed to help Macon County Schools as much as possible. "They want to ensure our students will have all the opportunities for pursuing their advance studies at the college," said Shotwell.

Highlands high-schoolers can get dual credit by taking SCC classes while at school. "They can graduate with 30 college credits which means they can enter college as sophomores," said Shotwell.

School officials say its likely athletes will return to school Aug. 1 for practice so students enrolled in SCC classes can begin classes when they start Aug. 15 before Macon County schools officially

## ... INFRASTRUCTURE continued from page 1

At last week's joint meeting between county and town commissioners, the town asked for a long-term monetary commitment for infrastructure funding from the county. The county asked for proof of long-term projects.

Nix said sewer collection projects are needed at the Harris Lake Drainage Basin, East Shore Lake Sequoyah, the Mirror Lake Drainage Basin and the Big Creek Drain Basin for a total of \$5.9 million.

Water distribution projects include replacing 35 lines with bigger lines for fire protection for a total of \$6.4

start.

"The school will be open, so they should be able to use the facilities," he said.

Highlands School Principal Monica Bomengen said many members of the Highlands School community are very pleased with the August 25 startup date.

"The only significant change that the later state date will have on the school is that high school students will take first semester final examinations in January rather than before the winter holiday break," she said. "However, most school districts outside the Southeast have done this for decades."

Bomengen said there is no measurable difference in students' exam scores whether they take them in December or January. "So I don't expect the exams to pose any problem at all."

During months-long discussions about changing the school calendar, Bomengen has said the start-up date didn't matter to her.

"The school factor that increases student achievement the most is teacher quality," she said. "Excellent teachers are excellent regardless of structural constraints of start date, length of class periods, and type of scheduling arrangement."

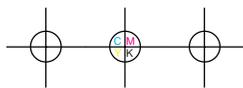
million.

"This will show them that we have long range requirements," said Mayor Buck Trott.

Commissioners asked Town Administrator Richard Betz to send county commissioners Nix's report with a letter requesting they consider the information when determining the town's funding request.

"This will show them how we would spend their money," said Commissioner Amy Patterson.

Betz said the projects might qualify for future county matching funds over the next 10 years.



### Wine Dinners at The Farm

The Old Edwards Hospitality Group is pleased to announce a new lineup of Special Events to include Wine Dinners at The Farm and a Burgundy Wine Weekend in mid-April.

In an effort to continuously enrich the food and wine experience for Inn guests, the resort's fine dining restaurant, Madison's has created an exciting schedule of special dinners featuring visiting winemakers and their associates pouring their finest vintages. These wines will be paired with the signature Carolina High Country cuisine as prepared by the talented culinary team in the kitchen at Madison's. Dinners will be held at the resort's special events facility, The Farm, located just outside of town in a rustically elegant setting.

Dinners feature a 6 p.m. reception followed by 6:30 p.m. Dinner at The Farm. Cost per person for the Dinner is \$125. Inn guestrooms, suites and cottages are also available for overnight stays on these evenings. An upcoming wine dinner is set for Thursday, March 24 featuring

### Old Edwards Job Fair

Saturday's Old Edwards Inn Job Fair held at the Highlands Conference Center brought in 12-15 "solid candidates" for positions at the Old Edwards Inn & Spa complex. The job fair has become an annual event in Highlands



Pictured are: Gloria Dobrolski, director of rooms, Kris Cardon, front desk supervisor and Molly McKim director of events planning. submitted photo

Domaine Serene Vineyards & Winery, Northern Willamette Valley Oregon.

Additionally, a Burgundy Wine Weekend is planned for April 15-17 and will include a wine tasting, lecture and a special wine dinner at The Farm. Two nights' deluxe accommodations for two are also included in the \$699 per couple price for the weekend.

For more information or to make reservations, please call: 828-526-8008.

### Mullen becomes Chamber chairman-elect

Jim Mullen of Adept Mortgage Solutions has been named Chairman-Elect of the Highlands Chamber of Commerce. He will become the Chairman on July 1, 2005.

He is a native of Oklahoma and graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a degree in finance. He served as a National Bank Examiner with the United States Treasury department. He later began his banking career in Plano, Texas.



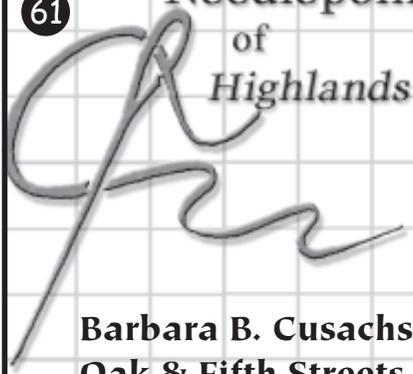
Jim Mullen

Highlands in 1989 as City Executive with First Union National Bank. He married his wife here and merged two families with five children, three of which graduated from Highlands School. He has been involved in the finance industry in Highlands since then.

He began his own business by helping companies and individuals find the best loan for their needs.

He is currently serving as President-elect of the Mountain Top Rotary.

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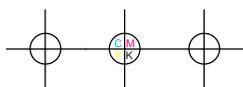


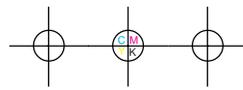
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# Viet Nam past closing in on Trott

By Nancy Welch  
Contributor

When Highlands Mayor Buck Trott contracted Type 2 diabetes in 2001, he assumed it was just age.

"After all, I am 77," he said.

Then one day on a long drive, he threw his right arm over the passenger's seat. When he took it down, he noticed he had numbness in his hand and arm.

"I thought it was probably connected somehow to the diabetes," he said.

He underwent physical therapy for 90 days. Eventually all but two fingers regained feeling.

But that was not the end of it. One day his feet became numb and he had trouble walking.

Even though he had been a member of the Ranch Hands, a special operations unit in Vietnam that sprayed Agent Orange, it never occurred to him there was a connection. He has since learned differently.

As a member of the Ranch Hands, Trott was one of 1,000 participants in an ongoing study of those who were involved with the defoliating chemical. For years he has been flying to California at two- and five- year increments for a physical exam as part of the study.

"In 1988, they took a sample of fatty tissue. Agent Orange contained Dioxin and they wanted to know where it was and how much was in our bodies," he said. "For years they didn't know how to measure it, but with the advent of nuclear medicine, the doctors were able to learn more."

This week the retired Air Force Lt. Col. will go for an MRI.

"We still don't have all the answers," he said.

Trott spent years flying a specially equipped plane that sprayed the defoliant, thus hindering the guerillas who hid under the blanket of foliage in Vietnam shooting at American servicemen on the ground. He was heavily

armored for the flights, as the guerillas would often shoot at the planes.

"We went out early in the morning before the temperature hit 80," he said. "There were always two runs."

He said before each flight, it was the pilot's responsibility to inspect the plane and the barrels of Agent Orange that were attached for spraying.

"There was always plenty of it on the ground and we just sloshed through it," he said. "And if something happened and we had to turn back, we had designated spots where we were to dump the chemical."

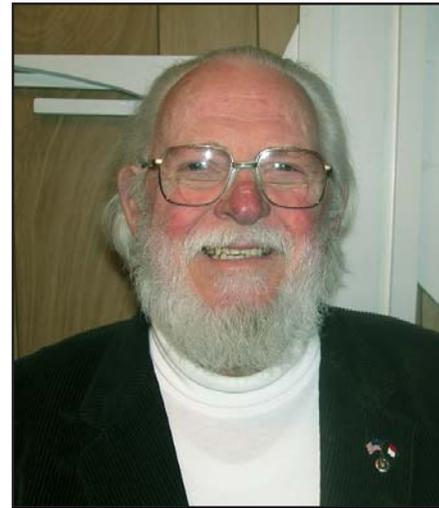
Many people who work in the dumping areas either suffered ill effects from exposure or later died.

Today, Trott is being treated by physicians at the Veterans Administration in Asheville. He said he couldn't ask for better doctors.

The study is coming to an end, and the military has learned that exposure to the chemical could allow for disability for certain illnesses for those who served in Viet Nam.

According to the latest "Agent Orange Review," a newsletter from the Department of Veterans Affairs, the illnesses are:

1. Chloracne (must occur within one year of exposure to Agent Orange)
2. Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
3. Soft tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma or mesothelioma)
4. Hodgkin's disease
5. Multiple myeloma
6. Respiratory cancers, including cancers of the lung, larynx, trachea and bronchus (no time limitation)
7. Prostate cancer
8. Acute and subacute transient peripheral neuropathy (must appear within one year of exposure and resolve within two years of date of onset)
9. Type 2 diabetes



Highlands Mayor  
Allen "Buck" Trott

10. Chronic lymphocytic leukemia

The study has also shown children of veterans have been affected. Those conditions recognized are:

1. Spina bifida (except spina bifida occulta)
2. Certain other birth defects in the children of women Vietnam veterans

Trott encourages all veterans to take advantage of the services offered by the VA hospital in Asheville.

"There is even a bus that leaves Franklin during the week at 8 a.m. and returns at 2 p.m. Veterans with appointments within those hours are welcome to ride the bus.

"And believe me, they waste no time at the hospital. If you have an appointment, you are seen right on time, no time is wasted," Trott said.

"The United States, in my opinion, is taking very good care of our veterans" he said. "The VA Hospital in Asheville and the Veterans Service Organization in Franklin ... they have taken very good care of me."

**Editor's Note:** Ongoing tests and declining health convinced Trott not to run for Mayor a third term.

If you would like to contact the Veterans' Service Organization in Franklin, call 828-349-2151.

## Agent Orange FACTS

Agent Orange, a herbicide used to defoliate the jungle forests of Viet Nam, was used from 1962 through 1971. The defoliant was so named because of the orange stripe painted around the barrels the chemical was shipped in.

Over the years, studies have shown the chemical, which contained Dioxin, has impaired the health of those who dealt with it as well as birth defects in some children.

A health study of the effect of the exfoliate on the service members who handled it, has been ongoing since 1982. The study, named the Ranch Hand Study, includes a comparison group of Air Force veterans who flew in service C-130 aircraft in Southeast Asia from 1962-1971, according to Dr. Joel Machalek, principal investigator of the Air Force health study on Agent Orange.

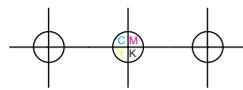
In a Defense Department briefing in March of 2000, Machalek, a civil service worker (GS-15) told DOD officials exposure to the chemical is linked to early onset diabetes.

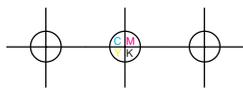
"The 1997 results suggest that as Dioxin levels increase, not only are the presence and severity of adult onset diabetes increased, the time to the onset of disease in decreased," Machalek said.

"As an overall group, the Ranch Hands (the name given those who participated) have experienced a 26 percent increase in heart disease."

He said the risk of other health issues, such as high blood pressure and the prevalence of prior heart attack increased with Dioxin levels. He also told the DOD officials that ground crew members, who loaded the chemical onto the C-130s, had a 22 percent increase in cancer.

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Buck Trott is one of the members of the group who have been studied over the years. Trott flew C130s spraying the exfoliate over Viet Nam.





# Tsunami hits home for local student

**Erin Brown**  
Staff Writer

**A**s relief officials uncover remains in the drying mud from December's tsunami, one Highlands resident, Rachel Lewicki, discovers a connection with one of the its survivors.

Lewicki's mathematics professor at Pfeiffer University, Dr. Ying Yaemsiri-King, experienced the devastating tidal wave and still gets goose-bumps whenever she speaks of her treacherous journey to Bamboo Island.

King and her husband, Dan, take a three-week trip to Thailand every two years with six students from their Martial Arts School to visit Muay Thai Camp. The last week of the trip is always at the southern part of the country and this year was no different. Interestingly enough, instead of booking the group at a Phi Phi Island resort the travel agent arranged for them to stay at a hotel in Krabi, which only suffered minor damage

from the wave.

That ill-fated morning, the group boarded one of two speed boats for a day-trip to Phi Phi. By a miracle of chance Ying, Dan and their students chose the boat headed for Bamboo Island, a small island off the coast.

In a matter of moments the water level dropped, and the bewildered tour guide stood frozen as the first of the tsunami waves pummeled the long boat. He screamed for them to jump into the ocean and swim to the nearby island.

Frantically, the Kings and their four students scrambled to the top of a mountain in time to see the second wave slam into the island on its crash course to the mainland.

"The sound of the wave was like a train and the way the wave broke was like the gate of the dam opening," said Dr. King.

The group remained on the mountainside for six hours before returning to Krabi.

The second of the two boats and

the passengers on board were never seen again. Phi Phi withstood a direct hit from the tsunami and hundreds died.

"Every time my husband and I talk about it, we are just chilled," said Dr. King. "It is not just the wave that hit us, but it's how we organized the trip, chose the hotel and the boat to Phi Phi island."

King is chair of mathematics at Pfeiffer, located just outside of Charlotte. Lewicki was a 2004 graduate of Highlands School and said every time Dr. King talks about her amazing experience you can see the hair actually stand up on her arms.

A February 22 *cnn.com* account states that government agencies and the United Nations claim the death toll stands at 169,752 with 127,294 people listed as missing in more than 11 countries.

"Our lives have changed since that day. We enjoy everything and are blessed to be alive," said Dr. King. "No problem is a problem anymore."



**Dr. Ying Yaemsiri-King is a native of Bangkok, Thailand, who came to the U.S. in 1979 to continue her education. In 1989 she earned her Ph.D. in Mathematics from N.C. State University. As head of the Pfeiffer University Math Department, Dr. King brings an understanding and motivational teaching style to her students.**

# Support tsunami relief with a cup of 'fair trade' coffee

**Erin Brown**  
Staff Writer

**S**ome say that everyone on Earth is connected to anyone else by six degrees of separation. These uncanny coincidences hold the world together, and every once in a while when tragedy strikes these are the degrees that bind.

That eerie connection to December 26's tsunami is tied to Highlands and served locally in a hot cup of java.

From the highlands of Indonesia across the sea to the highlands of North Carolina these coffee beans tell the story of loss and destruction.

Understandably, in the wake of earthquakes and tidal waves, most accounts of the catastrophe focused on the loss of life, but the coffee industry also felt the devastation of that natural disaster and fair trade practices are helping with recovery.

Tripp Pomeroy and Lee Harris of Café Campesino held a "coffee discussion" at Buck's on Saturday to promote fair trade coffee products and practices.

With fair trade coffee, small farmers organize into cooperatives and sell their coffee for a "fair price" which is guaranteed by companies like Café Campesino.

One of their coffee producers, located in the Ache (pronounced a-chay) region of Sumatra, Indonesia, couldn't export their product to Café Campesino, which coincidentally is the major

provider for Buck's Coffee Café.

"Buck's participated quite pro-actively in our Aceh Relief fundraiser, and they have continued with their unwavering support of our producers in Sumatra by also continuing to purchase their coffee," said General Manager Pomeroy. "Frankly Buck's was one of the first to ask if they could be a part of the relief effort."

Gayo Organic Coffee Farmers Association (or PPKGO) is an organic, Fair Trade cooperative located in the Gayo highlands of Sumatra — an area largely committed to coffee production. Café

Campesino, which is the only fair trade coffee company in Georgia, works with PPKGO to export their product to the states and into Buck's coffee cups.

"That's why we buy coffee from them," Buck's partner Linda Clark said. "Not only because it helps the producers, but we love what they're doing as a company."

When the tsunami hit, the coffee season was in between harvests and prices were rising. Suddenly even farmers needed a way to get the mountain-

•See COFFEE page 12



**Satellite images show before and after effects of the tsunami in the Banda Aceh region of Sumatra, Indonesia. Coffee producers in the region suffered from earthquakes and tidal waves and withstood the hardest hit from the natural disaster.**

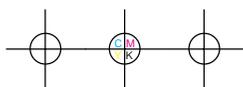




Photo by Erin Brown

**Katie Brugger, Breta Stroud, and Linda Clark listen while Cafe Campesino General Manager Tripp Pomeroy discusses fair trade coffees at Buck's Coffee Cafe on Saturday, Feb. 26.**

grown coffee down the washed-out roads to the lowlands. PPKGO's coffee processing facility was heavily damaged and in the aftermath, coffee prices took a hit.

"Fortunately, fair trade buyers remained loyal with their commitments to the producers," said Pomeroy. "Farmers continued to harvest their coffee and the prices have stabilized."

Pomeroy said that Buck's contributions to the relief fund have made a real difference on the ground for the producers. Almost half of the 32 producers from that region -- 13 children and two farmers -- were lost in the calamity.

"Their commitment to purchase the Sumatra coffee is one of the best examples of their commitment to fair trade and the people who supply our coffee in Sumatra, as their long-term recovery depends on the loyalty of customers like Bucks," Pomeroy said. "Sustained, reliable demand for our producers' coffee is perhaps the most critical contribution of places like Bucks," Pomeroy said.

As members of cooperatives, farmers become empowered to build and maintain economic and technical independence. Cooperatives help build infrastructure, increase production and improve the standard of living for the farmers (some have more than doubled their annual income — according to Transfair USA). The added revenue streams

also help build schools, provide more access to healthcare and better transportation.

Prior to cooperatives, small farmers had to sell their harvests to local middlemen ("coyotes") who frequently gave as little as 30 cents for a pound of coffee that sells in the United States for more than \$8. Unable to make a decent living, farmers were caught in a dangerous cycle, struggling to meet basic needs of food, housing, healthcare and education which many times these needs would go unmet. With fair trade companies in existence, a higher quality of coffee is purchased and a fair price is given and small farmers live better lives.

"By keeping dialogue open, we show the farmers we'll stick with them through thick and thin," said Pomeroy.

The PPKGO cooperative was founded in 1997 and became Fair Trade certified in March of 2000. The co-op's 1,900 farmers encompass 24 communities, and 20 percent of PPKGO members are women. In a region known for political conflict, the cooperative has achieved relative peace and unity, even among the different ethnic groups that comprise its membership.

"It's business by the golden rule," Pomeroy said with a smile.

To date Café Campesino has given over \$3,600 in relief aid to tsunami victims.

## 'Stepping Out' on stage at PAC

"I never thought I could do it....but I did it! We all did it!!"

This is the feeling of many a cast member who learned to tap dance in addition to learning their lines in "Stepping Out," the current production of the Highlands Community Players.

This entertaining comedy opens Thursday night, March 3, 8 p.m., in the Martin-Lipscomb Performing Arts Center on Chestnut Street in Highlands.

The plot concerns an adult tap dance class of eight women and one man who meet for weekly lessons in a church basement, instructed by Mavis, an ex-chorus line dancer. Each class member has a different

reason for being there, with dancing skills ranging from competent to hopeless. The disparate personalities create a certain amount of discord in the class, but when Mavis receives an invitation for her tapper to perform in a charity event, the group must put aside petty conflicts and work together as a team.

Choreographer Mary Adair Leslie (who is also in the cast) says "I'm so proud of everyone. They have worked so hard, and I think the audience is going to be in for a surprise when the members of the dance class shed their drab exercise clothes and appear in snappy tap dance costumes for the final performance."

## Highlands Playhouse auditions

The Highlands Playhouse will hold auditions on Saturday, March 12 at the Highlands Conference Center from 2-4 p.m.

Needed are "brothers" between the ages of 20 and 40 who can sing and move for "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat." Also needed is a "character man" 50 or older to play the father, Jacob.

This is a three-week commitment, July 10-31. Positions are paid. Those chosen will need to attend several weekend rehearsals in Atlanta during the month of May.

"Several in the cast are new to acting as well as to tap dancing," says director Tanji Armor, "and I am very pleased with their performances as new actors and, of course, with the performances of several HCP regulars."

Misty Thomas, who played Annelle so effectively in HCP's "Steel Magnolias," is Mavis, the dance instructor, and performs a dance routine in the show that is sure to amaze. Other members of the cast are Sue Feldkamp, playing Mrs. Fraser, the

instructor's acerbic assistant; Nancy Reeder as Andy, an unhappy wife; Ginny Harris as timid Dorothy; Caroline Wilder as quiet Nurse Lynne; Ronnie Spilton as the loud, flashy Maxine; Bonnie



The cast of "Steppin' Out" is ready to strut their stuff March 3.

Earman as Rose, down-to-earth veteran of the garment industry; Catlin Huitt, dancing to escape her family; and Mary Adair Leslie as Vera, the cleanliness freak who's into everyone's business.

Justin Taylor plays Geoffrey, a man of few words, as you might expect from the only male in the class.

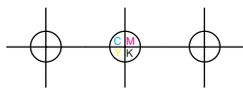
The HCP box office is open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. till 2 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center. Tickets, \$15, may be picked up there or reserved by calling 526-8084.

For Sunday matinees, the box office will open an hour before the 2:30 p.m. performance

The playhouse is also looking for children ages 8-12 to be part of the children's choir in "Joseph." Rehearsals for this group will be June 27-July 8, Monday-Friday, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The show will run July 13-31.

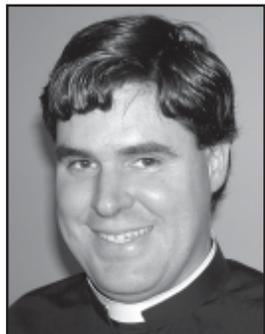
Children should have previous choir experience from church or school.

Also seeking women between the ages of 30-50 for "Jerry's Girls" with strong Broadway Belt voices (Mame, Dolly.) Please bring sheet music and resume. Children may sing acapella.



• **SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING** •

## Jesus and Maple Syrup



**The Rev. Thomas Allen  
Christ Anglican Church**

**H**ave you ever stopped to ponder Jesus' own words? Take for example this saying: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14.6). If that doesn't seem bold enough, how about, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." What are we to make of these sayings in the twenty-first century? How can such a man who claims to be the Son of God make such radical truth claims? Well, let's take a drive.

Late February 2003 my wife, Kimberly, and I drove to Niagra Falls for a short weekend excursion. We chose the more appealing rural route from our home north of Pittsburgh to Angelica, New York, home of the famous Cartright's MapleTree Farm. Of course, we didn't know it was famous until we slowly entered the farm area and saw rows and rows of parked vehicles and a long line of anxious faces that extended from the sugar shack's entrance to the gravel parking lot a few hundred feet away.

The early morning sun and strong odor of maple convinced us to park and join the crowd. Every few minutes families, couples, friends, and energetic children exited the sugar shack smiling and laughing. We never saw one disappointed face. We couldn't imagine what was so great about these particular buckwheat pancakes and maple syrup.

Closer to the entrance, our senses were stirred even more. A deep maple aroma filled the air inside the shack and around the doors. Waitresses bustled around long rectangular tables, placing stacks of buckwheat pancakes, sausage patties, bacon and tall glass syrup dispensers in the center of each table. We could hardly wait to sink our teeth into the saturated cakes! My only lament was the absence of grits with butter!

A cheerful young lady greeted us and took our order. We thanked our Lord for his many blessings, including His wondrous natural sources of food and water. Maple trees were no exception. Not only was their hardwood beauty and splendor aesthetically pleasing, but their pure sweet sap could be carefully tapped and enjoyed.

"Time to dig in!" I said to Kimberly. She was shocked! The brown syrup was quite runny and dispensed so quickly our entire plates were covered. "Why is it so runny?"

"I knew you were going to say that. I said the same thing years ago. Go ahead and try it."

Kimberly placed a spoonful of pure syrup in her

•See **SPIRITUALLY** page 15

• **PLACES OF WORSHIP ON THE PLATEAU** •

**Blue Valley Baptist Church**

Rev. Oliver Rice, Pastor (706) 782-3965

Sundays: School – 10 a.m., Worship – 11  
Sunday night services every second and fourth  
Sunday at 7 p.m.

Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting – 7 p.m.

**Buck Creek Baptist Church**

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11

First Saturday: Singing at 7:30 p.m.

**Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints**

NC 28 N. and Pine Ridge Rd., (828) 369-8329

Rai Cammack, Branch President, (828) 369-1627

Sundays: Worship – 10 a.m.; school & primary classes  
– 11 a.m.; Women's & Men's Org. – noon

Tues: Women's Org. – 6:30 p.m.; Library – 6-8 p.m.

Wednesdays: Boy Scouts of America mtg. – 6:30  
p.m.; Young women's activities – 6:30 p.m.

**Christ Anglican Church**

743-3319 or 460-7260

The Rev. Thomas Allen

"Traditional Episcopal Worship"

Worship and communion: Sundays at 4 p.m. at the  
Community Bible Church in Highlands.

Monday Bible Study: 6 p.m. Parish House

Tuesday Noon Bible Study: noon Parish House

Pot Luck Dinner: Last Sunday of the Month.

**Clear Creek Baptist Church**

Pastor Everett Wilson, (828) 743-3379

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11

Prayer – 6:30 p.m.

Evening Service – 7 p.m.

**Community Bible Church**

(Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Steven E. Kerhoulas, Pastor, 526-4685

3645 U.S. 64 east

Sundays: School – 9:30 a.m.; Worship – 10:45; Youth  
"The Rock" meeting.

Tuesdays: Women's Bible Study – 9:45

Wed: Supper – 6 p.m.; Bible Study – 6:45 p.m.

**Episcopal Church of the Incarnation**

Rev. Brian Sullivan – 526-2968

Sundays: Choir – 9 a.m.; Adult Sunday School  
classes – 9:15 a.m.; Holy Eucharist – 10:30 a.m.;

Children's Chapel – 10:30 a.m.;

Mondays: Women's Cursillo Group (Library) – 4

Tuesdays: Men's Cursillo in Jones Hall – 8

Wednesdays: Liturgy Mtg – 4 p.m.; Christian  
Education – 5 p.m.; Supper & Program – 6 p.m.

Thursdays: Holy Eucharist – 10 a.m.

Sunday Service is telecast on cable channel 14

**First Baptist Church**

Dr. Daniel D. Robinson, 526-4153

Sun.: Worship – 8:15 a.m., 10:45 a.m., 6:30 p.m.;

School – 9:30 a.m.; Youth – 6:30 p.m.; Choir – 7:15

Wednesdays: Dinner – 5:30 p.m.; Team Kids – 6 p.m.;

Prayer – 6:15 p.m., Choir – 7:30 p.m.

**First Presbyterian Church**

Rev. J. Hunter Coleman, Pastor, 526-3175

Sun.: Worship – 11 a.m.; School – 9:30 & 9:45.

Wednesdays: Children's Devotions – 9:30 a.m.;

Supper – 6 p.m.; Choir – 7 p.m.

Thursdays: Bible Study – 10 a.m.

Sat: Adventistas del Septimo Dia – 10 a.m. & 5

**Highlands Assembly of God**

Rev. Scott Holland, 524-6026, Sixth Street

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11

Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study – 7

**Highlands 7th-Day Adventist Church**

Wednesday evening prayer & Bible Study

Call Lloyd Kidder at 526-9474

**Highlands United Methodist Church**

Pastors Eddie & Kim Ingram, 526-3376

Sun: School – 9:30 & 9:45 a.m.; Worship – 8:30 & 11

Wed: Supper – 5:30 p.m.; Bible Study & activities – 6

**Holy Family Lutheran Church – ELCA**

Rev. Delmer Chilton, Pastor,

2152 Dillard Road – 526-9741

Wednesdays: Lenten Services at noon followed by a  
simple meal.

Sundays: Worship/Communion – 10:30

**Macedonia Baptist Church**

8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in Satolah

Pastor Jamie Passmore, (706) 782-8130

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11

Choir – 6 p.m.

Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg. – 7 p.m.

**Mountain Synagogue**

St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church, Franklin 369-6871

Friday: Sabbath Eve Services at 7 p.m.

For more information, call

(706)-745-1842.

**Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church**

Rev. William M Evans, Priest

Parish office, 526-2418

Wednesdays & Fridays: Mass – 9 a.m.

Saturday Vigil Mass – 4 p.m.

Sundays: Mass – 11 a.m.

**Scaly Mountain Baptist Church**

Rev. Clifford Willis

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m. & 7

Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg. – 7 p.m.

**Scaly Mountain Church of God**

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Alfred Sizemore

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 10:45 a.m.;

Evening Worship – 6 p.m.

Wed: Adult Bible Study & Youth – 7 p.m.

For more information call 526-3212.

**Shorloff Baptist Church**

Pastor Rev. Wayne Price

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11

Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study – 7

**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship**

Rev. Maureen Killoran (part-time)

526-9769

Sundays: Worship – 11 a.m.

**Westside Baptist Church**

Interim Pastor, Terry Dixon

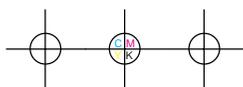
Services in the basement of the Peggy Crosby

Sundays: Fellowship & Worship – 11

**Whiteside Presbyterian Church**

Cashiers, Rev. Sam Forrester, 743-2122

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11



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Cashiers Road next to  
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**PT SECURITY GUARD POSITION** – Sat. & Sun. 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Call 828-526-4161.

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## HCCDC epitomizes future of childcare

After more than a quarter century of service to the Highlands Community, the First Presbyterian Day Care Center closed its doors on Valentine's Day. The Child Care Center located on the lower floor of the church's brick Education Building at the corner of Main and Fifth Streets was the only full time, year around child care center in Highlands - until now.

The torch of providing quality child care to the working families of Highlands, has passed from the church to the HCCDC's Board of Directors. The center opened on Feb. 11.

HCCDC received its State

Operating License on February 10 and is licensed for 58 children - an increase of 40 percent.

With its radiant floor heating, greater security, bright and cheery interiors, floor-level windows, air conditioning, covered and outdoor playgrounds, and four age-appropriate classrooms, early childhood development is moving into the future.

Four new, touch-screen computers in the classrooms for the 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children provide new learning opportunities for the preschoolers and staff.

## ● POLICE & FIRE REPORTS ●

The following are the Highlands Police Department log entries for the week of Feb. 23-March 2. The only names printed are of public officials and/or people who were arrested.

### Feb. 23

• At 3:20 p.m., a counterfeit \$20 bill was turned into the police from D&J Express Mart.

• At 4:32p.m., officers responded to windows being broken out at Highlands Electronics.

### Feb. 24

• At 6 p.m., a motorist at N.C. 106 Highlands Country Club was cited for driving without license.

### Feb. 25

• At 6:50 a.m., officers responded to a possible breaking and entering at Buck's Coffee Cafe but it was unfounded.

• At 3 p.m., a breaking and entering was reported at Wolfgang's on Main restaurant where a back window was found open and wine valued at \$100 missing.

• 3:45 p.m., officers responded to an alarm at a residence on Ravenel Ridge Road. All was secure.

### Feb. 26

• A cell phone found at 64 Stop and Shop was returned to the owner.

• At 3:15 a.m., officers responded to a 9-1-1 hang-up from Kelsey Hutchinson Inn. It was unfounded.

### Feb. 27

• At 11:50 a.m., officers responded to an accident at Holt Knob Road where a Stop sign was flattened.

• At 7:30 p.m., officers responded to an accident at U.S. 64 east and Memorial Park Drive. There were no injuries.

### Feb. 28

• At 2:15 p.m., officers responded to an accident on N. Fourth Street. There were no injuries.

• At 11:50 p.m., Taylor Thomas Earman, 29, of Highlands was arrested for drunk and disorderly conduct. He was released on a \$150 bond.

The following are the Highlands Fire & Rescue Department log entries for the week of Feb. 23-March 1

### Feb. 27

• The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Sawmill Road. The victim died at Highlands-Cashiers hospital.

### Feb. 28

• The dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Cullasaja Club Drive. It was false.

• The dept. did a disaster drill at the Jane Woodruff building on the hospital campus where a simulated carbon monoxide poisoning was enacted.

### March 1

• The dept. provided mutual aid to Cashiers but it was cancelled en route.

## ... TASK FORCE continued from page 1

Drug testing is top on her list. The Town of Highlands does enforce drug testing on its employees, including police, but it does not screen for the opiate oxycontin. That concerns Wheeler. "It's an extra test that costs \$40." OxyContin is a controlled-release form of oxycodone prescribed to treat chronic pain.

The Office of National Drug Policy reports that the number of oxycodone emergency cases increased nearly 36 percent in a single year, from 3,369 in January to June 1999 to 5,261 in January to June 2000.

Wheeler said Macon County Sheriff Robbie Holland suggested she try to implement a committee of community members to create a bridge between the local police department and its citizens. There are a number of citizens already interested in the "job."

"A big concern in the community is trying to improve our policing of drug use in the town limits and in the area, and with the crystal-meth problem

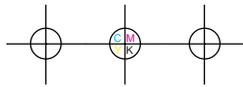
being such a big issue we were hoping to become much more visible force," she said.

Commissioners Alan Marsh and Dennis DeWolf, along with Highlands Police Chief Jerry Cook were selected by the Town Board to man the committee. Wheeler will select four other members from the community. She said she wants a person from the clergy, the school and two additional citizens.

"The committee's purpose is just to enhance relationships between the community and the police force and to help police to do their job," Wheeler said.

Chief Cook said that a forum might be a better way to communicate because he cannot discuss specific cases or ongoing investigations but he was open to the idea.

Once the committee is formed, commissioners want members to meet to develop a mission and agenda before continuing.



... SPIRITUALLY continued from page 13

mouth. Just the syrup. The rich amber maple delighted her taste buds with its fresh, light, deep nuances of maple. No preservatives, no synthetic additives, only the purity of one of God's sweetest treasures. Aunt Jemima was already history.

She had become accustomed to the generic substitute and had not recognized the 'Real Thing.' She had a false idea of what maple syrup was like. But now, she quickly understood what

she had been missing. She had been missing the pure simple truth. She had been fed the substitute too long.

In Thomas Dubay's "The Evidential Power of Beauty," he states that "wonder at reality demands the humility to sit at the foot of a dandelion" (77). Our culture is not a quiet one. Reflection in the simple, the ordinary, and the natural gifts of God are easily overlooked. This often stunts our growth potential in our faith. The substitute, the synthetic, the

manufactured realities can gradually replace the Real Thing in such a way that we find the Real Thing alien and strange. If we are to strengthen our discipleship, to draw ourselves closer to Christ, and to fellowship with Him daily, we must first remember there is no substitute. Our faith cannot be prepackaged and put on a shelf for later use. It is a living, thriving, ongoing truth that cannot be ignored too long or it will gradually slip away and become foreign.

Taste the rich and the pure gifts of God often so that you grow in your ability to recognize what is false. Paul reminds us in Phillipians that "whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy-meditate on these things." (4:20) Remember, there is no substitute for Truth.

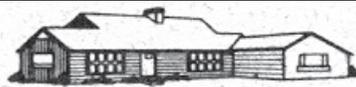
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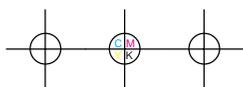
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**Jane Woodruff Medical Building**

Suite 300, 171 Hospital Drive, Highlands, NC

**Medical acupuncturist opens visiting practice at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital**

The practice of eastern and western medical traditions will come together in Highlands this week, when a new physician opens his practice in medical acupuncture on the campus of Highlands-Cashiers Hospital.

Dr. Carlos "Charlie" Vargas, ABHPM, will begin performing medical acupuncture on a weekly basis Wednesday afternoons in Suite 600 in the Jane Woodruff Medical Building on the hospital campus. The new part-time practice opens to patients Wednesday, March 2.

The term "medical acupuncture" refers to acupuncture performed by a licensed medical doctor. Dr. Vargas is a fully-trained physician who practiced conventional western medicine for four years in the Franklin area before turning exclusively to acupuncture. He is board certified in family practice, as well as being a certified acupuncturist.

"My training in conventional medicine allows me to bring the science and experience of modern western medicine to the practice of a traditional healing art that goes back thousands of years," he explained recently. "I offer a personable, individualized approach to medical acupuncture to people with a wide variety of medical conditions and symptoms."

Among the benefits of medical acupuncture are promotion of health and well-being, prevention of illness, stress reduction, relief of pain from musculoskeletal disorders (such as headaches, neck and back pain and arthritis), treatment of neurological disorders (such as neuropathy and sciatica), treatment of many respiratory

ailments (such as sinusitis, sore throat, asthma and bronchitis), and relief from a number of urinary and reproductive disorders.

His training in acupuncture has included both traditional Chinese and eastern techniques and European and American approaches.

Dr. Vargas received his formal training in acupuncture at Helms Medical Institute at UCLA, and is a member of the American Academy of Acupuncture. He began practicing medical acupuncture full time in October of 2003, when he opened New Mountain Medicine, PA, in Franklin.

He received his degree in medicine from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1996 and performed his residency in family medicine at West Virginia University in Morgantown, WV, where he was chief resident and also named intern of the year. He completed his residency in 1999 and joined a group medical practice in Franklin. He was part of Franklin Family Practice, PA, until September 2003.

In addition to his acupuncture practice, Dr. Vargas serves as medical director for Angel Hospice and Palliative Care, and continues to work part time in urgent care clinics in Franklin, Asheville and Hendersonville. He is also a volunteer and board member of Healthy Carolinians of Macon County.

He is also a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians and the North Carolina Medical Society, and is board certified by both the American Board of Family Practice, and the American Board of Hospice and Palliative Care.

• **BUSINESS NEWS** •

**Curves supports communities with 7th annual food drive**

Curves, 30 Minute Fitness and Weight Loss Center of Highlands, is joining the Curves International Inc., "Curves Food Drive to benefit local food banks.

Last year, the Curves food drive collected more than 4,000 tons of food for local communities.

Anyone joining Curves the week of March 7 may bring a bag of groceries and have the normal service fee waived. Anyone may drop off non-perishable food times at Curves

Monday through Friday during business hours during the month of March.

"The Curves Food Drive promotion allows us, the franchises, to help more women reach their fitness goals, while giving back to the community simultaneously," said Donna Domingo, owner of the Highlands club.

Curves is in the Great Things shopping center on N.C. 106.

# ● UPCOMING EVENTS ●

## On-going

- At Highlands Wine & Cheese at the Falls on Main, free wine flights Friday & Saturday from 4:30-6:30 p.m.

- "Evenings of Entertainment" Friday nights at Instant Theatre Company in Oak Square on Main Street. Tickets are \$15 with reservations and \$20 at the door. Doors open at 7:45 p.m. Show starts promptly at 8 p.m. No entry after show begins. Call for reservations. 342-9197.

- The Instant Theatre Company presents free Improvisation classes for adults Wednesday evenings February through May, 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the ITC's Studio on Main at 310 Oak Square. Auditions for musicians and singers are held 7:30-8 p.m. also on Wednesdays. Call 526-1687.

- Pilates classes are Tuesdays & Thursdays at 5:15 p.m. at the Rec Park. The cost is \$8 per class. Participants need to bring a mat if possible.

- At the Bascom-Louise Gallery - Open Studio with a Live Model 5:30-8:30 p.m. Tuesdays at the gallery. This class is for artists 18 yrs. and older or under 18 with written parent permission.

- Al-Anon Group meets at noon on Thursdays in the Community Room at First Presbyterian Church.

- Mountainview Alcoholics Anonymous meets in the remodeled basement room of the Presbyterian Church sanctuary, Mondays in Highlands at 8 p.m.; Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. (women only); Wed. and Fri. at noon.

## March 3, 4, 5

- Macon County Soccer Club Spring Soccer Registration at the Rec Park from 5:30-7 p.m. Thursday and Friday, from 10-1 on Saturday. \$30 for returning players; \$40 for new players; \$5 sibling discount. Make checks out to Macon County Soccer Club. If child has never been registered with Macon County Soccer Club, a copy of the birth certificate is needed at registration. For more information, call Christy Nix Weller at 526-9931.

## March 5

- The Episcopal Church of the Incarnation is sponsoring a Flying Solo, a seminar for area singles Sat., March 5, from 10-3. Flying Solo founder, Dr. Kay Collier McLaughlin, a psychologist with specialties in group development, issues of singleness and bereavement counseling. It costs \$5 and includes lunch. Call 526-2968.

- Chili CookOff and Salsa Contest at the Highlands Conference Center from 6:30-9:30 p.m. \$20 per person for chili, salsa and beer. Tickets available at the Visitor Center. For more info, call 526-5841.

- Barker's Creek Gristmill in Dillard will be open from noon to 4 p.m. to custom-grind your small grain or ours. For details, contact Woody Malot at 706-746-6921.

- The Nantahala Club will take a five-

mile moderate hike on the Ridge Trail at Coweeta Hydrological Lab. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin (opposite Burger King) 10 a.m. Bring a drink, lunch, and wear sturdy shoes. Reservations are required. Call leader Gail Lehman, 524-5298, for a reservation or more information. Visitors are welcome, but no pets please.

## March 6

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 3-mile hike to Black Mountain in the Jones Creek area. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin, near Burger King, at 2 p.m. Hikes are limited to 20 people; reservations are required. Call leader Kay Coriell, 369-6820, for reservations or more information. Visitors welcome, but no pets please.

- Taco Dinner at Highlands United Methodist Church to raise funds for Bolivia mission trip at noon. \$7 adults, \$3 children.

## March 8

- PTO is hosting a chili dinner from 5-6 p.m. in the Highlands School cafeteria. The dinner is a gift to all Highlands School parents and teachers, with donations accepted. The PTO meeting will be held from 6-7pm, followed by public viewing of all the World of Science exhibits.

## March 9 & 10

- Highlands School students in grades K-8 are supporting the American Heart Association by collecting sponsorships for jumping rope and playing basketball. Jump Rope for Heart (K-5) and Hoops for Heart (6-8) will help the A.H.A. fund research and provide grants to find cures for heart diseases.

## March 10 & 12

- Beekeeping School for Beginners will be held two days - Thursday from 7-9 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at the N.C. Extension Office in Franklin. To register, call at 526-2385.

## March 10 & 11

- Highlands School will dismiss at 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 10 for staff development. There will be no school on Friday, March 11 for a teacher workday.

## March 12-13

- HCP presents "Stepping Out" at PAC. Call 526-8084 for tickets and info.

## March 12

- The 2005 X-Tour (alternative/punk concert) featuring Falling Up, Hawk Nelson, Seventh Day Slumber at 7 p.m. (doors open at 6) at Highlands Rec. Park. You Could Win...I-POD mini, FLIP Skateboard. \$5 at the door. Call 526-4685 for information.

- "Let's Talk About It" Substance Abuse Forum, 6:30 p.m. at Tartan Hall in Presbyterian Church in Franklin. For more information call 349-2426

## March 13-18

- Roots of the Appalachians - The People and the Culture - at The Moun-

tain Retreat & Learning Centers and Elderhostel International at in Highlands. To register call 877-426-8056 or register online at [www.elderhostel.org](http://www.elderhostel.org). A special Commuter Rate is being offered by The Mountain for local residents which includes the program, field trip and 8 meals. To register as a commuter contact the Mountain at 828-526-5838 ext. 203.

## March 19

- A car show fundraiser for Macon County Senior Games Saturday, 10 am to 2 pm at the Whistle Stop Mall parking lot on the Georgia Road (U.S. 441 South), Franklin. Registration fee for cars to be displayed is \$10 per vehicle and will be accepted from 10 am to 1 pm the day of the show. Trophies will be awarded to the top 20 cars and a Best of Show trophy also will be presented. Admission is free.

## March 24

- At OEI - March Wine Dinner Thursday, March 24, featuring Domaine Serene Vineyards & Winery, Northern Willamette Valley Oregon. Dinners feature a 6 p.m. reception followed by 6:30 p.m. Dinner at The Farm. Cost per person for the Dinner is \$125. Please call 828-526-8008.

## March 28

- Macon County School Board meet-

ing held at Highlands School library at 6 p.m. Commissioners are hoping for a good turnout from the community.

## April 2

- The annual Senior Games spring flea market is Saturday, 8 a.m.-2 p.m. in the County Community Building gym, 1288 Georgia Road, Franklin. Sale booths rent for \$20 each. Refreshments will be available for sale. For more information call Senior Games Coordinator Teresa Holbrooks at (828) 349-2090.

## April 5-7

- NC Competency Test for highschoolers at Highlands School.

## April 11

- Adult softball organization meeting 6 p.m. at the Rec. Park.

## April 15-17

- At OEI - Burgundy Wine Weekend at The Old Edwards Inn and Spa Friday, April 15 - Sunday, April 17. For additional information or to make reservations, please call 828-526-8008.

## April 19-20

- High School Comprehensive Test for 10th Grade.

## May 3-5

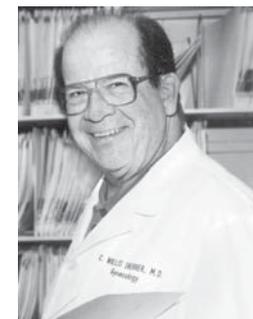
- Last Month Competency Test for Seniors only.

## Highlands-Cashiers GYNECOLOGY

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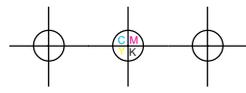
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# Forresters return from Bolivia, their lives changed

By Kim Lewicki

A fast week in Montero, Bolivia was all it took for Robbie and Jennifer Forrester. Like every person who has made the trip before them, the Forresters returned to Highlands changed people.

"It was everything I thought it would be, and nothing I thought it would be," said Robbie, an EMT with Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept.

"It makes you feel good that you live here and thankful for what you have, but ashamed at how wasteful we are," he said.

Eight years of mission work spearheaded by Dr. John Baumrucker is finally showing real progress in Montero. "I wonder if we've done all we can do here," he said when arriving this time.

Caring and expertise at area hospitals and clinics has moved light-years ahead of neighboring towns and cities thanks to equipment donations and training from the Highlands-Cashiers area.

Churches and orphanages have been built and furnished. Street children now live better safer lives than children with homes and families to return to each night.

"It was sad to see how much better the children in the orphanage live than the children in the villages," said Jennifer. She said it's obvious the mission projects over the years have really changed the lives of the people.

Jennifer and Robbie Forrester worked with Dr. John teaching ultrasound techniques, CPR and how to use defibrillators that were given by the Baptist Hospital System in Tennessee. The hospital system is sending eight machines exactly the number needed to supply the hospitals in Montero and in the neighboring town of Portachuella.

Jennifer taught three doctors how to use the ultrasound machine properly. That machine was



Joanna Baumrucker and Jennifer Forrester teaching ultrasound techniques at a clinic.



Robbie Forrester bringing up the rear with children of the Gwarni tribe in Portachuella.

purchased four years ago for a clinic in Montero and gives low cost or free care to the poor. The doctors were never taught how to use the machine to its full extent, so it sat underused.

Robbie and Dr. John went to the village of Portachuella to visit the hospitals that were to receive the defibrillators. It was in Portachuella that last year's mission youth group made bricks to build houses.

Robbie became immediately endeared to the children of the Gwarni Indian tribe of Portachuella.

"They are everywhere," he said. "Kids playing with nothing - a piece of fruit, sharing one bicycle and they are so happy - very content with absolutely nothing."

Written on a blackboard in the church to which the mission donated \$1,300 last year were the words "Welcome Dr. Jonh."

"In their language the 'h' is silent," said Jennifer. "They didn't understand where it belonged in his name, so they just put it on the end."

A wall to keep neighbors' animals out of the sanctuary was finished, as was a pulpit area with two storage units on either side "And they still had money left to lay ceramic tiles," said Dr. John.

The next stage involves tiling the rest of the sanctuary, covering up the hoof prints of animals that wandered into the church when the cement was still wet.

As expected the weather in Bolivia was hot, the humidity at about 100 percent, said Robbie, but none of that mattered. The Forrester's memories are filled with the faces and gestures of



Robbie Forrester with a child from the village.

happy people.

"They gave me so much more than I could ever give back," he said. "They take pride in whatever they do."

Both Jennifer and Robbie were even amazed at the food.

"The Bolivians showed their appreciation of our efforts with the food they prepared. Everything was fresh and the presentation was beautiful," said Jennifer.

The Forresters have every intention of returning to Bolivia next year if possible.

Meanwhile, Robbie said he will try not to get angry with people and the petty complaints and things they dwell on here at home.

The weeks of mission work began with Robbie, Jennifer, Joanna and John but will continue for a least a month.

Once medical equipment donated by Angel Hospital is shipped and set up, Dr. Choi from Highlands who arrived this week, will begin laparoscopic surgery.





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**Highlands Area Landmarks:**  
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